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ABSTRACT

Based on the premise that multimethod approaches that integrate quantitative and qualitative research methods are best suited to contextual studies of media audiences, two studies of mass media use and meaning were conducted with college undergraduates. Research grew out of a classroom assignment wherein students avoided all media products (films, TV, etc.) for a 24-hour period to focus attention on the place of media use in their lives. This was also what was asked of the subjects in the study. Initial subject pool consisted of 80 undergraduates at Loyola of Chicago, of whom 31 completed the study. The study was broadened to include subjects drawn from Northwestern and DePaul; the numbers were increased from 80 to 250. Of these 250, 89 completed the study, 49 experimental subjects and 47 control subjects. Subjects were pretested and surveyed. The second study extended the fast period to 48 hours, some items in the pretest were changed, tests of subjective mental health and self-image were added, and participants were encouraged to volunteer for follow-up interviews. Tests to determine the comparability of Study 1 and Study 2 quantitative results were performed on 28 variables. Survey consisted of open-ended questions on levels of media use. Responses indicated that both solitary and social media use have more than one dimension. Subjects' remarks regarding the difficulty of changing media use patterns can be interpreted as an indication of how deeply media use is embedded in social context. (Includes eight notes, and three tables of data. Contains 27 references.) (NKA)

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An Integrated Approach to Studying Mass Media Audiences

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Abstract

Mass media audience research requires studying overall media use in the context of the audience's everyday lives. Multimethod approaches that integrate quantitative and qualitative research methods are best suited to contextual studies of media audiences. These ideas are developed in two studies of mass media use and meaning conducted with college undergraduates. The study concludes that the theoretical framework and research strategy reported here are applicable to many types of mass media audience research.

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An Integrated Approach to Studying Mass Media Audiences

> I have begun to wonder whether our theories do not impress upon us a new object of analysis, one more difficult to analyze because it can't be so easily pinned down--that is, the endlessly shifting, ever-evolving kaleidoscope of daily life and the way in which the media are integrated and implicated within it (Radway, 1988, p. 366).

The shifting focus of mass media audience research suggested by Radway challenges much of past mass communication research devoted to audiences, which has followed the road paved by industrial concerns (Rogers 1992) and has been directed toward stabilizing and predicting the consumer choices of media audiences (Ang 1991). Traditional audience research has decontextualized media use in two ways: first, by trying to examine the behavior of distinct media audiences (e.g., "the television audience" or "the film audience") as if they were functionally and operationally distinct from a broader "media audience" (Radway, 1988), and second, by removing media use from the social and domestic circumstances that define and are defined by that use (Ang, 1991).

The task of present research, therefore, is to study the place and meaning of media use in the audience's lived experience rather than assuming a priori the importance and meaning of that

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use. The approach departs from traditional mass communication research in its emphasis on media use in its embeddedness, its constituent role as part of everyday living. The research reported here addresses this embeddedness through an integrated approach that (1) recontextualizes media use (both in terms of use across media and in terms of social, familial, and cultural contexts), and (2) uses an integrated strategy of quantitative and qualitative methods. In this way, the study represents an effort to develop strategies for mass communication research that address both the complexity of the contemporary media environment and the dynamic nature of users' responses to this environment.

Contextually-based audience research builds on traditional approaches to media use by addressing the contingent nature of media use and meaning. Contextual audience study literature puts forward four interrelated premises upon which a theory of media use in everyday life might be based:

The consequences of the routine and habitual use of media

Routine and habitual use results in the variable attention with which audiences attend to media content, as noted in numerous studies that demonstrate subjects' generally poor recall of most media content (Neuman, 1991). This suggests that users' attentiveness to media is variable and often casual (Bausinger, 1984; Himmelweit & Swift, 1976; Neuman, 1991).

The consequences of easy access to multiple media technologies

Recontextualizing the study of media use means, in part, the

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study of use across media (Morley, 1992), which Bausinger (1984) refers to as "the media ensemble with which everyone deals today" (p. 349), and Hanke (1990) describes as "media ecology" (p.188).

The consequences of changes in media use over time in response to stages of personal development and shifting lifestyles

Previous studies, including the classic 1960 Schramm, Lyle, and Parker study of children's television use (DeFleur & Dennis, 1991), have demonstrated that levels of media use and media choices shift over the course of the user's life in response to personal development and shifting lifestyles (Himmelweit & Swift, 1976; Larson, Kubey, & Colletti, 1989).

The consequences of media users' social and material contexts

The interaction of context and media use has consequences both for media use choices and for the interpretation of meaning (Neuman, 1991).[1] Hence, media use both influences and is influenced by context (Kubey & Larson, 1990). Rogge (1989) suggests that the material circumstances of users' lives (including time and other resources available for leisure) form an important, though often overlooked, part of media use context.

A research agenda based on these four premises calls for a departure from traditional methodological approaches to audience study, that is, the adoption of flexible, multimethod approaches. Noting the increasing tendency of even traditional quantitative research toward a more contextual approach, Perry (1988) states that multimethod approaches that include qualitative methods are

more appropriate for capturing contextual variables than reliance on quantitative methods alone.

Lindlof (1991; Lindlof & Grodin, 1990) has also argued for the utility of qualitative techniques in audience research. However, Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) remind us that "neither positivism nor naturalism provides an adequate framework for social research," advocating a "reliance on common sense methods of investigation" (p.25). The integrated multimethod approach to the study of a particular group of media users reported here is a "common sense" effort to recontextualize the study of media use and meaning.

Methods

The current research grows out of a classroom assignment wherein students were asked to forego all media products (radio, television, films, audio recordings, newspapers, magazines, and books) for a 24-hour period, to bring to the students' attention the place of mass media use in their everyday lives[2]. During this media fast, students were asked to keep journals. Over the course of several semesters, these media-fast journals were filled with repeated expressions of depression, social withdrawal and alienation, denial, avoidance, and anger. Struck by the vehemence and consistency of these student comments, the researchers set out to study these findings in a more systematic fashion; a pilot study based on this assignment was conducted in June 1991 during the first summer school semester at Loyola

University in Chicago, Illinois.

Subjects

The study's initial subject pool consisted of 80 undergraduate students enrolled in various communication classes, of whom 31 completed the study. A second, similar study was conducted in April 1992. The size of the sample was increased, and its composition was broadened: populations were drawn from undergraduate communication students at Northwestern and DePaul universities, as well as Loyola; the sample size increased from 80 to 250. Of these 250 subjects, 89 completed the study, 42 experimental subjects and 47 control subjects.[3]

Measures

The investigators administered a pretest consisting of psychological measures and a survey (including open- and close-ended questions) of media use patterns (radio, television, film, audio recordings, newspapers, magazines, and books). The psychological measures included the extroversion questionnaire developed by Eysenck, Eysenck, and Barrett (1985); mood indicators developed by Meyer and Shack (1989); the Zung depression scale (1965); the Nowlis Mood Adjective Checklist (1965); the Srole anomie scales (1956); and Larsen and Diener's mood measure (1985).

The pretest media use questionnaire, the postfast questionnaire, and the interview protocol contained questions drawn from a core set of question areas that cross all media.

Quantitative evaluation of media use habits. Questions in this area related to subjects' typical patterns of using radio, television (broadcast, cable, and tape-viewing), films, audio recordings, newspapers, magazines, and books. Much of this information was collected in the pretest's media-use survey.

Contextual and social aspects of media use. Items drawn from this question area prompted subjects to describe the interconnections they perceived between their media use and their immediate social world, and the importance and meaning(s) of media use in a variety of social contexts.

Subjects' relationship with media content. Items in this area asked subjects to consider the importance of media use in their lives, and how they select and consume media based on their interests and preferences. Subjects were also prompted to respond to these questions in terms of their personal history of media use.

The media deprivation experience. Questions in this category specifically address the subjects' reactions to the media-fast experiment, investigating feelings of deprivation, media use substitutes, and a changed awareness of media in their lives.

Procedures

Subjects were randomly assigned to experimental and control conditions. The experimental group was further divided into Friday and Saturday groups to control for possible variance due to the day of the week on which the subjects fasted. Subjects

assigned to the experimental group were asked to avoid using all media products for a 24-hour period. At the end of that time, they were supposed to complete and return the enclosed posttest, which repeated the psychological measures and added questions designed to probe the subjects' media-fast experience. Envelopes for control-group subjects contained an abbreviated posttest consisting only of the psychological measures. Out of the sample's 80 original participants, 31 (15 experimental and 16 control) completed the study and returned the questionnaires.

The second study differed from the first in the following ways: (1) the period of the fast was extended to 48 hours from 24; (2) the pretest questionnaire was slightly different in that some items included in the pilot study were eliminated due to psychometric problems in the pilot study; (3) a test of subjective mental health (Bryant & Veroff, 1984) and a test of self-image (Rosenberg, 1965) were added to the psychological tests; and (4) participants were encouraged to volunteer for follow-up interviews.[4] Researchers interviewed five volunteers in one group and two individual sessions using an interview protocol.

The researchers' goal was to devise a multimethod research strategy aimed at contextualizing mass media audience research. However, research that is broadly ethnographic in nature or heavily dependent on qualitative technique is precluded almost by definition from claims of generalizability. In fact, this is the

point of research that departs from the strictly quantitative mass communication research tradition (Rogers, 1992). It is by disaggregating subject responses and recontextualizing them that the how and why questions of mass media use and meaning can be answered.

Results

Results reported here include the media-use questionnaire (open- and closed-ended questions) used in Study 1 and Study 2 and interviews with five Study 2 subjects. Tests to determine the comparability of Study 1[5] and Study 2 quantitative results were performed on 28 variables. Only three showed mean differences that were statistically significant at the $p<.05$ level; 1.4 effects should have been significant by chance alone at this level.[6] These studies demonstrate few, if any reliable mean differences, and therefore, it seems reasonable to compare the two sets of results.

Quantitative Evaluation of Media Use Habits

> It's too addicting!--Subject's open-ended response

Table 1 approximately here

A major portion of the media-use questionnaire consisted of questions on levels of media use in terms of television, radio, audio recordings, films, magazines, newspapers, and books.

Subjects were also questioned about their use of videotapes, cable television, and media equipment. This information is reported in Table 1. Only two use elements demonstrated a significant difference between the two studies: the number of hours of radio listened to per day and the number of books read per month. Mean responses from Study 1 results were significantly greater than from Study 2. Although it is tempting to say that conducting Study 1 in the summer and Study 2 in the spring may account for the differences, none of the other use indicators significantly differed across studies. Some use indicators, in fact, seemed remarkably consistent from Study 1 to Study 2: hours of television watched per day differed by only 0.02 hours; number of hours of car radio used per day differed by only 0.15 hours.

The open-ended responses illuminated the amount and types of media use that subjects identified as habitual or as the result of what subjects called an "addiction". Subjects' comments on their media "addiction" were most often related to television and phrased in intensely self-disparaging terms: "TV is the drug of the nation; we're all addicted junkies."[7]

Comments regarding radio use (in the car and otherwise) were more often couched in terms of habit rather than addiction, as was the use of audio recordings.

> Radio is important for my car. It's the only time I listen to it.

My CD player is my life! What would I do without my music? I DON'T KNOW MAN! [Subject's emphasis]

Subjects were also asked to comment on their level of involvement with television, radio, and audio recordings. When asked how often they were intensely engaged in media use to the exclusion of all other activities ("very often" =1 to "never"=5), subject responses from both studies fell between 2 ("sometimes") and 3 ("occasionally"): television=2.69, radio=2.39, and audio recordings=2.71 (reported figures are weighted means).

Contextual and Social Aspects of Media Use

This question area includes the solitary or social uses of media, media use integrated with social activity, and the material circumstances surrounding media use. Subjects were asked to estimate the percentage of time they used television, radio, film, and audio recordings alone or with others. For these subjects, radio (27.57% use with others) and audio recordings (25.57% use with others) are most frequently used when alone; film is most frequently used in social situations (68.59% use with others); and subjects' television use was nearly evenly divided between solitary and social uses (48.99% use with others). (Reported figures are weighted means.)

Open-ended responses and interview transcripts indicate that both solitary and social media use have more than one dimension. In instances of solitary media use (primarily with audio recordings and radio, but in some instances with television as

well), these media were often used casually, to provide a background for other activities: "I go out of my way to listen to the radio. I prefer it because I can do something else while I'm listening." At other times, the media acted as a companion: "I like the TV on in the background for company when I'm alone, but busy doing things like cleaning."

Using media in social situations was a common pastime among these subjects. Often, media use, such as going to the movies or viewing a tape, was the reason for a social gathering: "...when with friends, it provides a temporary escape from the work of [college]." At other times, media use is part of the context, not the reason, for getting together with friends: "We don't necessarily ...come over and listen to CD's, but, you know, we usually do that when we're waiting around to do something else....[Ben]"

Subjects frequently commented on their limited time for leisure activities and how media use was implicated in the choices they made. Although some students remarked that their schedules left them little time for any media use, others noted that this lack of time was particularly relevant to their use of print media. When time was at a premium, many subjects reported that some types of media use, particularly of the print media, were abandoned: "When I have free time, the last thing I want to do is read."

Although none of the media-use questionnaire items asked

subjects to report income figures, the material circumstances surrounding media use were collected indirectly in terms of access to media technologies. These subjects as a group had little difficulty with access to a range of media technology: subjects reported 2.48 television sets and 3.80 radios; 82.0% of subjects reported that they own a VCR; 81.0% own a Walkman; and 95.0% of subjects rent VCR tapes (reported figures are weighted means).

Subjects' Relationship with Media Content

I like to channel surf.--Subject's open-ended response

Table 2 approximately here

Table 2 reports findings from both studies on the relative importance to the subjects of the different media. The results of the studies provide an interesting contrast, although the two tests cannot be strictly compared due a difference in scales, as detailed in the table. Nevertheless the direction of the relationships is instructive. In Study 1, pairwise two-tailed *t*-tests indicate that subjects rated television, film, and magazines as having the most importance to them; in Study 2, the same test indicates that subjects rated radio and audio recordings as being the most important to them.

With many subjects, the relationship between medium and content was problematic, hence, the complex nature of "channel

surfing", or grazing through many different radio or television channels. In some instances, subjects appeared more concerned with the medium than with particular content: "I have WXRT [Chicago radio station] on most of the day at work, but I tend to jump around sometimes during commercials." In other instances, the subject's interest in content motivates a restless search for satisfaction: "I have...varied interests in music so my time is spent flipping from one [radio station] to another."

Other subjects reported a more refined form of "channel surfing" in which they grazed through a preset round of preferred channels.

> It used to be just channels up and down, but now I got a universal remote...so it will usually go in order, just like the [channels] on my radio are set in number sequence. I go 3, 6, 11, 26, 27, 31, 35, and 37. The list I gave is pretty much the order that I go in.- - Kristian

Subjects repeatedly reported that they preferred tape and CD technology to the radio due to the increased freedom of choice and flexibility: "When I have time to listen to music, I'd rather listen to something of my own choosing as opposed to the planned programming of a radio station." This same tendency is also indicated in the many subject comments regarding newspaper reading habits. These subjects indicated that although they read the newspaper regularly, they read only certain sections of

topical interest: "Just read it [the newspaper] for headline news, comics, and sports."

The strongest subject relationship to content is reported by those subjects (fans, hobbyists, enthusiasts, etc.) whose interest in a particular type of content motivates a search across media: "If I'm not big on that person, I'll look closer into what they're doing, follow a boxer or baseball or basketball [player] and then if they're in a movie, I'll see it.[Kristian]"

Subjects who recombine and recirculate media content demonstrated an intense relation to media content and technology. In this sample, this behavior was manifested in the subjects using stereo and taping equipment or multiple VCRs to make their own video- and audiotapes.

> Kerry: I have a collection of 20 tapes that I made with different types of music on it. My roommate always thinks it's strange, 'cause I can sit there for hours and just tape and edit.
>
> C.K.: So you customize the music for your listening taste. And then where do you listen to those tapes?
>
> Kerry: You know what, I really don't listen to them.
>
> C.K.: So the pleasure is in putting them together?
>
> Kerry: Yeah.

Interview subjects were asked about their personal history of media use, eliciting responses along a number of paths. For many subjects, their changing lifestyle and personal development

changed the context and selection of media texts: "As a kid, I watched [television] a lot, but rarely anymore....I don't have patience for TV anymore." However, other subjects noted the continuities in their media use from childhood into young adulthood in terms of content preferences.

> Kerry: I like real scary movies, really gory movies. I like fighting movies, cops-and-robbers type movies.
>
> D.L.: And those are the kinds of things you watched when you were younger?
>
> Kerry: That's it. Those are the kinds of things that we used to go and see primarily.

The Media Deprivation Experience

> Oh my God! How awful.--Subject's open-ended response

Table 3 approximately here

Table 3 reports the results of the ratings of difficulty in completing the media fast, both for the discrete media and overall. Perhaps the most striking result in these tables is that for both the 24-hour fast and the 48-hour fast, the medium most difficult for these subjects to give up was radio. Further, although the ordering of individual media is slightly different in each study, radio, television, and audio recordings were the three media missed most by subjects.

Another objective of the present research was to discover

whether characteristics of usual media use were related to the strength of subjects' feelings of deprivation. Across both studies, these correlates fall into two basic categories: 1) the amount a medium is used is positively correlated with difficulty in giving up the medium during the fast, and 2) the perceived importance of the medium to the subject is positively correlated with difficulty in giving up the medium during the fast. The exception to these two categories of responses is the positive correlation of extroversion to the difficulty of giving up radio.[8]

Study 2 subjects rated completing the fast overall as more difficult than giving up any specific medium. Subjects' comments on the difficulty of giving up media in the context of their everyday lives compared with media deprivation in unusual circumstances, such as a camping trip, also refer to this holistic characteristic of the media's presence in everyday contexts. One response from an interview subject expresses this particularly well:

> I went out of the country for 10 days in December. I went to Guatemala and they didn't have any radio or TVs where I was. But I didn't miss it as much--and that's strange, because I missed it more during the day, the one day that I had the media freeze in the States than I did when I had nothing at all for 10 days. I think that's partly because I was so busy, and I was

> experiencing something new, so I really didn't care and really didn't miss it at all. Sure I kind of missed the daily paper, but I knew I would be home soon so it didn't really matter. It was a good break, too, 'cause I consciously didn't bring my Walkman on the trip 'cause I just wanted to get away from it. I wanted to get the whole feeling. It definitely was ...very different to have a media freeze [i.e., the media fast] here than it was out of the country because you can escape it; here, there's always a radio playing somewhere.--Scott

Subjects also remarked on how they missed one particular type of content--the news. Several subjects reported that the feeling of "not knowing what was going on" as a result of the media fast was quite difficult to cope with. Subjects associated this feeling with the use of media content in conversations.

Subjects also noted that the fast situation made them aware of the media's pervasiveness and how difficult it was to avoid media use outside of their homes.

> [The media fast] was very difficult. When I cheated and read the paper, I didn't even think about the fast 'cause I was sitting at a bar waiting for someone, and there was a newspaper on the bar, a ball game on the TV, and the jukebox was playing--what was I supposed to do?

Subjects indicated that despite their new awareness (and often negative feelings) about their media use patterns, they were not eager to act on this information and transform their media use habits. Often, subjects' comments focused on the possibility of changing their use of a single medium (typically television and books) rather than their overall pattern of use.

> If you get out of the habit [watching TV], it's a lot easier not to even think about it. It's the normal thing you usually do. Takes awhile, though.--Ben

Discussion and Conclusions

These findings suggest that, at least for this sample, media use and meaning is multidimensional, dynamic, interactive, and contingent on social context. The balance and richness gained through evaluating quantitative and qualitative data cast doubt on reductionist theories of media use and meaning. For example, comparing Table 1 (amount of media use) with Table 2 (comparison of perceived importance of various media to users), the medium used most often (radio [Study 1], VCR and radio [Study 2]) is not the medium most valued by users (television [Study 1], audio recordings [Study 2]).

Further, despite the vehemence of some subject responses on how intensely they are engaged with their preferred media, other data and responses note the habitual nature of much media use and how often the media are used as "electronic wallpaper", as background for other activities, both social and solitary.

A few conclusions can be drawn from this. First, most media use (at least nonprint media use) occurs in the context of other activities. Second, subjects are only moderately engaged with their media use. And, third, even casually used media can form a valued part of the context of everyday life and may be missed when absent. In addition, the responses and data reported here suggest a two-step model for most subject involvement with media content: a relatively consistent use of media in a more-or-less casual fashion, punctuated with instances of intense, though perhaps only transitory, engagement with a specific medium or type of content.

In addition to the complexity of these relationships, the importance of context to media use is clearly demonstrated in the data and subject responses. For example, in reconsidering the finding reported in Table 3 (rating the difficulty of completing the fast by medium for Study 2), it is striking that subjects rated the fast overall as more difficult to complete than avoiding any single medium. (This is especially striking since the rating for category "overall" is not additive or derivative in any way, but was offered as its own category for subject response.) This finding recalls Bausinger's "media ensemble," suggesting that the presence of media in these subjects' lives was more holistic than could be indicated by the subjects' feelings of deprivation of any single medium.

This impression is strengthened by repeated subject

references to the difficulty of completing the assigned media fast in the context of their everyday lives rather than simply going without media in a new or radically different context. Scott's remark comparing the discomfort of the 24-hour "media freeze" performed in Chicago compared with the relative freedom from feelings of media deprivation experienced during a trip to Guatemala is illustrative. It demonstrates not only the media's embeddedness in everyday contexts, but how shifting to a radically different context makes previous media use patterns superfluous--perhaps though only until the radical context has been transformed over time to the everyday.

Indeed, subjects' remarks regarding the difficulty of changing media use patterns can be interpreted as a another indication of how deeply media use is embedded in social context. For many of our subjects, changing their media use patterns is not merely a matter of self-discipline regarding a single medium--to change media use patterns may require changing the context of overall media use. The apparent durability of this relationship recommends the type of research strategy reported here.

That integrated research strategy is based on the tenets of contextualism, that is, the study of mass media use and meaning in everyday life. As discussed earlier, these tenets involve: 1) studying the consequences of routine and habitual media use; 2) recognizing that the study of media use and meaning needs to address media use as a whole, rather than in a medium-by-medium

approach; 3) exploring how individuals alter their patterns of media use over time, in terms of both the perceived importance of preferred media and preferred content; and 4) identifying the social, economic, and material conditions that form the context for using media and interpreting content.

The contextualist approach eschews reductionist theoretical approaches of both traditional and critical/cutural studies, as well as the profoundly unproductive championing of quantitative versus qualitative methodologies. We believe that hybrid, multi-approach methodologies will yield the richness of subjects' lived experiences with media and facilitate researchers' efforts to understand the complex, interactive, and dynamic processes engaged by using media.

By adding contextual elements as appropriate, quantitative studies can be expanded and tied more concretely to the questions under study. It is equally important to note that not all qualitative studies truly address contextual aspects of media use. This is particularly the case when investigations of a single genre or medium are carried out only through interviews and focus groups (e.g., Seiter et al, 1989; Hobson, 1989) without any quantitative instrument that efficiently collects information about the subjects' overall media use patterns, including the social and domestic contexts of media use. These quantitative measures can provide a balanced perspective from which to evaluate more specific media uses and meanings revealed through

qualitative inquiry.

Finally, our focus on audience studies should not be construed as abandoning larger systemic studies that investigate the political economy of the communication industries. Given the present restructuring of these industries and the concomitant political and regulatory changes, such studies take on added importance. We also recognize that these larger systems form an additional contextual element on national and other levels.

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Table 1

Media Use Profile

	Study 1		Study 2	
Variable	N	Mean	N	Mean
Hours TV watched/day	31	2.39	89	2.37
Hours of radio listened/day[a]	31	3.90	89	2.88
Hours of audio rec./day	31	2.06	89	1.94
Hours of VCR use/week	30	2.80	72	3.01
Hours of car radio use/day	31	1.35	83	1.10
Films viewed/week[b]	28	5.04	84	4.46
Magazines read/month	30	4.33	84	3.94
Newspapers read/week	31	3.97	88	3.57
Books read/month[a]	31	2.81	87	1.45

Note. [a]See Note 5.

[b]Includes theaters, cable and broadcast television, and videotape.

Table 2

Mean Importance Ratings of Various Media, Studies 1 and 2

	Study 1		Study 2	
Medium	N	Rating (1-5 Scale)	N	Rating (1-7 Scale)
Television (T)	31	3.29	89	3.71
Radio (R)	30	2.83	89	4.55
Audios (A)	31	3.10	88	5.05
Films (F)	31	3.35	89	4.88
Magazines (M)	30	3.70	87	4.23
Newspapers (N)	30	3.10	88	4.49
Books (B)	31	2.74	86	4.87

Note. Importance ratings have been reverse-coded so that higher ratings represent greater perceived importance. Importance ratings were compared only within (and not between) studies. Study 1 used a 1-5 ratings scale, whereas Study 2 used a 1-7 ratings scale. Pairwise two-tailed t-tests were used to compare all possible pairs of ratings separately within each study. The following contrasts were statistically significant at the $p<.05$ level: within Study 1: T > (R & B); F > (R & B); M > (R, A, N, & B); within Study 2: R > T; A > (T, R, & M); F > (T & M); M > T; N >T; B > (T & M).

Table 3

Media-Fast Mean Difficulty Ratings

Medium	Rating, Study 1[a]	Rating, Study 2[b]
Television	2.33 (1.18)	5.37 (2.70)
Radio	3.07 (1.28)	5.98 (3.22)
Film	1.73 (0.80)	4.80 (2.72)
Audio recordings	2.60 (1.45)	5.12 (3.15)
Newspapers	2.33 (0.33)	4.86 (3.09)[c]
Magazines	Not reported	3.80 (2.69)
Books	2.00 (1.13)	4.31 (3.26)[c]
Overall	2.67 (1.11)	6.32 (2.15)

Note. [a]N=15. Ratings of difficulty were made on a 4-point scale (1=not difficult, 2=somewhat difficult, 3=difficult, 4=very difficult). Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

[b]N=41. Ratings of difficulty were made on a 10-point scale (1=Easiest thing I've ever done; 10=Most difficult thing I've ever done). Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

[c]In Study 2, N=42 for this medium.

Notes

1. The present research concerns the meaning of media use itself, as in much of Radway's (1984) Reading the Romance. Although it is certainly the case that context influences the audience's interpretation of media content (e.g., Lewis [1992], The Ideological Octopus), this aspect of the study of meaning is outside the boundaries of the research reported here.

2. This assignment was developed by Prof. Phill Rock, University of Missouri, St. Louis.

3. For the second study, a MANOVA was used to compare all those who initially participated in the study with those who completed it. Using the psychological, demographic, and media-use variables, no differences greater than would be expected by chance were found between these two groups, thus suggesting that the attrition rate does not threaten the internal validity of the effects of the deprivation exercise.

4. Though difficult to compare because of a sample of only five, using a MANOVA to measure multivariate differences along psychological, demographic, and media-use variables between the second study's full sample and the five interview subjects, no significant differences were found.

5. Analysis was also conducted to examine the comparability of Friday and Saturday fasters in Study 1. Between group t-tests were performed at the .05 level on 60 posttest items measuring difficulty of the fast, the importance of various media, mood,

depression, and anomie. Only one of these contrasts revealed a statistically significant difference in group means (specifically, students who fasted on Friday [mean=3.43] expressed more hopefulness about the future than did those who fasted on Saturday [mean=2.63, $t(14)=2.37$, $p<.04$]). Given that three between-group differences would have been expected by chance alone, the single observed difference led to the conclusion that no reliable difference existed between the two groups. Therefore, results from the two experimental groups were combined in subsequent analysis.

6. The average number of hours of radio listening per day was significantly greater in Study 1 than in Study 2, $t(114)=5.18$, $p<.001$, two-tailed.

7. Interview subjects are identified by their first names; subject quotations reported anonymously are open-ended media-use survey responses.

8. A complete list of statistically significant correlates of reported difficulty in completing the media fast for both studies is available from the authors.